

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: WIFE DECLARES PRESIDENT VELASCO IN EXCELLENT HEALTH

REF: LIMA 1849

1. PRESIDENT VELASCO'S WIFE, CONSUELO GONZALES DE VELASCO, HELD PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 5 PURPORTEDLY TO DISCUSS OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL PERUVIAN WOMENS' COMMISSION OF WHICH SHE IS PRESIDENT. WHEN SUBJECT OF VELASCO'S HEALTH WAS BROUGHT UP, CONSUELO TERMED IT EXCELLENT, SAYING THAT IF IT WERE NOT SHE WOULD NOT BE HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. ON PARTICULARS WHICH HAVE GIVEN RISE TO EXTENSIVE RUMORS, MRS. VELASCO SAID, "LUCKILY, HE ONLY SUFFERED AN INCREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE (DUE TO EXCESSIVE WORK) AND YESTERDAY (MARCH 4) HE PRESIDED OVER THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN OUR HOUSE AT CHACLAYCAYO." HE HAD NOT BEEN CONFINED TO BED ACCORDING TO MRS. VELASCO.

3. HAVING PRONOUNCED THE PRESIDENT'S HEALTH PROBLEM TO BE MINOR, MRS. VELASCO IMploRED JOURNALISTS TO LET HER HUSBAND REST. "I HAVE DECIDED TO BE THE JEALOUS GUARDIAN OF HIS HEALTH" SAID MRS. VELASCO. "YOU JOURNALISTS AND EVERYBODY HAVE TO HELP IN THIS". MRS. VELASCO WENT ON TO SAY THE PRESIDENT WORKED TOO HARD AND DID NOT TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. SHE SAID HE HAD NOT HAD A MEDICAL CHECK-UP IN OVER TWO YEARS.

4. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT INFORMS US THAT ON MARCH 5 IN RESPONSE
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TO QUESTIONS GENERATED BY A REPORTEDLY ALARMIST CARACAS STORY

CONCERNING VELASCO'S HEALTH, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY
ZIMMERMANN'S OFFICE STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT SUFFERED A SLIGHT
"INDISPOSITION" ON FEBRUARY 28, SOMETHING THAT COULD HAPPEN TO
ANYONE AND THAT HE WAS RESTING AT HIS SUMMER HOUSE (CHACLAYCAYO)
ON HIS DOCTOR'S ORDERS.

5. MRS. VELASCO'S PRESS CONFERENCE AND PALACE STATEMENT (NOT
CARRIED LOCALLY) APPARENTLY CONSITUTE GOP RESPONSE TO UNCEASING
RUMORS REGARDING PRESIDENT VELASCO'S HEALTH. MRS. VELASCO'S
AT TIMES EMOTIONAL COMMENTS SEEM TO SUGGEST AT LEAST TWO THINGS.
FIRST THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO WILL BE RESTING AND LESS ACTIVELY
INVOLVED IN ROUTINE AFFAIRS OF GOVERNMENT. SECONDLY SINCE
PRESIDENT VELASCO HAS NOT HAD A MEDICAL CHECK-UP IN IN OVER
TWO YEARS, ACCORDING TO MRS. VELASCO, THERE MAY BE SUBSTANCE
TO RUMORS THAT HE PLANS TRAVEL TO U.S. FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.
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